Literature.

De l'Art en Allemagne, par (Of Art in Germany, by) HIPPOLYTE FORTOUL.

[THIRD NOTICE.]

We proceed to the author's account of architecture as it was made manifest in

THE TEUTONIC MIDDLE AGE.

"Whilst the Italians were constructing their churches and adorning their palaces with the relics of antiquity, architecture, which had penetrated to the north in company with faith, not finding on this soil virgin of ruins, those small columns that suggested the partition of the semicircular arch, took the more bold step of allowing its arcades to soar in full liberty, after a fashion that seemed emulous of the vast shadows of the German forest. The natural development of the religious genius in the west, the parallel progress of the science of construction, the knowledge of Saracen monuments which the Crusades had imparted, contributed, without doubt, to that happy corruption which substituted the ogival system for the Roman arch. A conjecture put forth by a man who died too early for science, M. Mazois, and to which I have heard M. Augustin Thierry lend the authority of his name and erudition, would furnish a more positive foundation to Gothic architecture, without excluding any of those influences which are ordinarily supposed to have developed the art of the middle ages. This conjecture, assuming a transformation which the example of antiquity and the inspection of several monuments and texts justify, makes the Gothic cathedral proceed directly from the Roman church, which itself is but an alteration more or less extensive of the Christian basilica; so that, in fact, it would establish the continuity of the great forms of architecture in the west. It is more than probable that at barbarous epochs, in the provinces comprised between the Somme and the Rhine, the difficulty of procuring stones, of hewing them and of fixing them, restored the use of wood in buildings, which was universally employed by the inhabitants of these countries before the invasion of Cæsar; in fact, the Gaulish carpenters, who had to imitate with materials familiar to themselves Roman structures, would naturally translate the semicircular arches of the porticos, the arcades, the windows, the vaults, by the ogive—the columns by clusters of small columns—the *oculus* by the carved rose—the circular chapels by polygonal chapels—the vast walls pierced with small windows, by small walls pierced with vast embrasures—the austere nakedness of the ancient basilica by the decorations, ever getting more angular, of the cathedrals. These translations undoubtedly obtained, and not unreasonably, much favour and esteem from the ancient Gallo-Roman peoples; and then, by the concurrence of divers circumstances since revived, they in their turn were translated into stone. Then it was that they rose from the small dimensions to which theretofore they had been limited, to those gigantic proportions which, but for them, men would not have dreamed of, much less have compassed. Thus, then, construction in wood, which is the principle of Greek architecture, must be that of Gothic architecture also; thus Nature, according as she was interpreted by the Hellenic or the Teutonic genius, must have produced the most simple or the most complicated forms of human art. This opinion will never be very popular among the Germans, first, because it is too familiar, and then because it ruins certain pretensions to which their national pride is ardently attached. That which in France is vulgarly called the Gothic style, is designated on the other side of the Rhine, the German style; either of these phrases is too restricted, and it would be better to substitute, as do the Italians, that of Teutonic, which has a larger meaning, which designates the northern races in general, and which does not prejudge the geographical question as to the spot where the ogival system received birth.

"The architectural erudition of the Bavarian school could not well have abstained from producing a form so essential as that which is founded on the pointed arch. M. Daniel Ohlmüller, who was born at Bamberg in 1791, was the person commissioned to erect a small church in the old German style, as the phrase goes here. Where has he erected this monument? There is outside Munich, at a reasonable distance from the ramparts, on the other side the Isar, a village called Au; this village has been converted into a faubourg towards which the city stretches its arms as if to seize it. It is in this faubourg of Au, and in the midst of the pots of beer which working men there quaff, that Teutonic art has taken refuge. The church which M. Ohlmüller constructed at this spot under the invocation of St. Mary-of-Succour, is not entirely finished; when I entered it, people were employed in disguising the brick with that plaster, from which there seems no escape. The façade has one great merit, that of not exhibiting any ornaments which are not the translation, so to speak, of some internal necessity. It is cut vertically into three sections by two ridges, the prominences of which announce the plan of the columns that divide the interim into three naves; the portal, which occupies the central section, is surmounted by a carved rose; each of the two extreme sections is pierced by an ogival window and a carved rose, the object of which is, as well companionship to the principal division, as the representation and illumination of the lateral naves. Above the three roses, small Gothic mouldings form a happy transition, and lead to the spire, single in its kind, like the portal, placed also at the centre of the façade, and delicately opened to send forth with ease the sounds of the bells which it shelters. On penetrating to the interior, I was much struck by the abundance in which the light is distributed, and also by a boldness in the launch of all the proportions that made me forget the contracted space which they occupy; the columns that divide the precinct are very graceful; the apside is rounded off; and, for the purpose of deceiving the eye as to the real dimensions, the choir is raised above the level of the church.

"I have not seen, however, that which will be most remarkable in this miniature cathedral; the nineteen windows are to be filled with most beautiful stained glass. At the moment in which I am writing they lie packed up for removal from a saloon, in which they were exhibited, to the church which they are to adorn. But though it was impossible for me to see them, I have seen some specimens so admirable, that I doubt whether the painters on glass of our day have any cause for envying the colourists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Before the year 1825, a citizen of Nüremberg, M. Franck, had successfully applied the process of the painters on glass of the middle ages; another inhabitant of that city, M. Schwartz, has since carried the labours of his countryman to perfection. The Messieurs Brisserie, who have all along contributed so potently to the restoration of Christian art, have caused some small paintings on glass to be executed by M. Vörtel, that are masterpieces of style and ability; I have seen some like them that are destined to ornament the windows of the romantic castle of Hohenschwangau, in which the energy of the tones and the complete transfusion of the colour are allied to those of compositions the most remarkable for character. The King of Bavaria has established in his porcelain manufactory a particular division for painting on glass, and has placed it under the superintendence of M. Gärtner, an architect, and M. H. Hess, a painter. The windows of the Teutonic church in the faubourg of Au, were executed there. May France soon produce the rivals of such beautiful works.

"One cannot help remarking the scrupulosity with which the Bavarians reproduce the monuments which they imitate. They give you bricks for marble and stone, it is true; but if they play tricks with the substances, the appearances are irreproachable. In France, and in the name of those principles of invention and liberty behind which they have entrenched themselves, the architects who have hitherto carried matters with a high hand in respect of their art, applaud themselves for remaining indifferent to those historic studies, in virtue of which a new generation has come to demand from them an account of the cold and equivocal taste that marks their monuments. Since the reign of Louis XV. there has been spread among us a passion for naked stone which was most singularly abused by the school of the empire. Even at this day we fancy we have done every thing when we have raised mere walls; and if, now and then, we attach to them some shreds of painted canvass, we are struck with admiration of our luxury and prodigality. The common-sense principle, that makes pre-existing wants the basis and rule of good architecture, ought not to be enforced with a rigour too Lacedemonian; in art, as in philosophy, traditions have a considerable value, and should be suffered to enrich with all the treasures of human experience, the experience that is limited by a present necessity and mere dry logic. I have already spoken to you of a new school that is educating itself in ideas, more sound at once, and more comprehensive; there exist, without its bosom, distinguished spirits, whom the natural progress of the times is conducting to great thoughts, and who will assuredly make themselves room. Why is not their advent hastened? with their support, beyond all contradiction, it would be easy to surpass the German in learned combinations of historic forms, and, above all, in tasteful ornament; but now, it must be admitted, they have outstripped us. Their erudition can only be satisfied by correctness of manner in the monuments which they raise; this makes their works more complete, but also less natural than ours."

We confidently believe that much of what this last paragraph contains is true of our own country;—distinguished spirits are at work, though not united in a common school nor aggregated to a confederate sect, that will profit by the learning and by the errors of our German kinsmen, and so establish a system of architecture, based as well on old historic forms as on the principles of invention and freedom, congenial with the exigencies of climate and the conditions imposed by materials at hand, which shall deserve the name of NATIONAL.

WARMING AND VENTILATION.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—In your last week's paper (No. 29), there is a letter upon the subject of warming and ventilation bearing the signature of Mr. George Spencer, in which there are mis-statements in connection with my name which require refutation.

The letter professes to be an introduction to Mr. Spencer's own scheme for warming and ventilating; and this is commenced by bringing forward an example of what is denounced a failure in my system; a case in which Mr. Spencer acknowledges that no attempt whatever had been made at ventilation. Upon such points as these, however, I do not dwell, my present object being to correct the more serious inaccuracies into which Mr. Spencer has no doubt inadvertently fallen.

It is said that the apparatus the failure and inefficiency of which are fully described, had been erected in 1838 under my "*personal direction*" at the establishment of Messrs. Bentley and Co., in Burlington-street; but I beg to assert that I was never employed in its construction, and, moreover, that I knew not of its existence until the present occasion; and this fact, it is conceived, will exonerate me from all responsibility for any defects which may be apparent in the apparatus alluded to.

The *principle* of my mode of warming is also generally censured in the communication in question. I may, therefore, be permitted to add a few remarks in its defence; and in doing this, I would endeavour to remove from your correspondent's mind the impressions under which he seems to labour, by expressing my full concurrence with his views, that any room, *by whatever means it may be warmed*, should have ample provision for ventilation. Even if it be not warmed at all, ventilation is necessary for the comfort and health of the individual living in it.

I beg, therefore, to suggest whether your correspondent is not in error when he attributes the ill effects which are stated to have arisen from the use of the hot-water apparatus at Mr. Bentley's to this particular mode of warming, rather than to the absence of a proper ventilation.

The only object of this apparatus is to transmit heat from a furnace to the rooms of a building requiring to be heated; and I know of no other more convenient; more efficient, or more safe mode than this to effect that purpose.

Having, then, the power in this apparatus of transmitting and diffusing heat, it depends upon the knowledge and skill of the person employed, whether it be economically or judiciously applied so as to answer the purpose intended.

Mr. Spencer, in bringing forward this subject, might have selected some out of the numerous instances of complete success which this method of hot-water warming apparatus presents in various parts of London and elsewhere, when he would have been led to the conclusion that rooms may be and are warmed by these hot-water pipes without the prejudicial effects which he attributes to them; and, at the same time, exhibiting good specimens of ventilation, and great economy over the open fireplaces.

Your correspondent evinces a laudable desire to be useful to your readers, and I shall look forward with interest to his promised "development of a system of warming and ventilating large buildings efficiently and economically."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A. M. PERKINS.

No. 6, Francis-street, Regent-square,
Aug. 29, 1843.

ELECTRICITY GENERATED THROUGH THE AGENCY OF STEAM.—For a fortnight the Royal Polytechnic Institution is to be shut, in order that due preparation may be made for a series of experiments which are to be exhibited by an apparatus of an extraordinary character, which fully develops Mr. Armstrong's discovery of the power of generating electricity through the agency of steam. We shall avail ourselves of the earliest opportunity of making our readers acquainted with the truths that are developed. The directors are zealously and anxiously performing their duty to the public, and we trust that their efforts will be received as they richly deserve.—*Polytechnic Review.*

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